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The President's Message

We are off to old Boston in January and the city sounds interesting and exciting. I must say I like this year's plan of going a month earlier. It's been a long and unusual summer for us . . . and it's time to get away from our normal routines, otherwise we become stale. An old greenkeeper once told me, "After the season is over, get away, go someplace for a week or two. Better still, take a long vacation. Get away from your work. Leave your club for awhile. It will do you a world of good—you'll come back refreshed and with a new outlook." I've taken his sage advice at the end of every season and I've never regretted it.

The educational program in Boston looks excellent. So does the equipment show, for it's always tops. But let's palaver a moment about our International organization. I am deeply concerned about the direction in which it is going and I think you should be, too. What is our paramount purpose; or rather, what should our objective be? In this mobile nation of ours, the GCSAA is no longer a ma-and-pa country store operation and we must not be run like one. We have reached the supermarket stage; therefore, we must conduct ourselves in that way. It is imperative that the direction we take includes these factors: great vision, insight, and, most of all, men of high calibre. In order to be run like the big business organization that we are, nothing less will do. Let us ask ourselves, Is this the direction the International organization is now taking us? Is the International the true voice of our vast membership—with all its desires, hopes, and need for better communication? Are we presently being run by strong and clear-thinking minds that are looking boldly into the exciting modern future? Or are we still run by minds and ideas of yesterday's ma-and-pa country store? Ask yourselves other questions: Have the GCSAA elections gone against superintendents? Are you satisfied with the elections of the past few years? Are you satisfied with the candidates who have been presented on the slates? Look at what has happened in the past few administrations. After all the talk of how strong we are, the managers effortlessly have become general managers—and many superintendents are under their thumbs today. Did our International organization take a bold stand on a coordinating but always

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separate identity in our trade publication, one which is read by green chairmen and club presidents? Or did we hide our heads in the sand? Look at the certification program. In my opinion it has not accomplished anything worthwhile—except to scare some superintendents into thinking they must have it to hold their jobs . . . and others who egotistically took it for prestige, for more paper to hang on the wall. I understand now that certification, which was supposed to have been “unadulterated” and only for superintendents—and was heralded as such—is presently available to managers and general managers. Who next?

In these days of America's great concern for the environment, and a time of hue and cry against pesticides that directly concern us and our profession, we have (regretfully) government people teaching us about pollution and about chemicals and giving us state examinations (so we can get a license or permit in order to do our jobs) while our International is running all over the country giving us seminars on bookkeeping.

By next June the GCSAA headquarters is going to be moved from the Chicago area, the mainstream of things, to Kansas City. We are deserting a city to which other organizations and businesses are flocking. We are leaving Chicago to build a new headquarters in another city. Building, yes, not leasing, when leasing has always proved to be fore economical. Why go into real estate management? What do we know about it? Even if I'm wrong and construction is feasible, why don't we move to a southern climate? Extra land could be purchased for possible future development of our own golf course, an experimental station, and so on. Why get permanently stuck in Kansas City?

What about more communication with the local chapters, plus a little more relevancy and involvement without a lot of red tape occurring every time you want somebody from International to show up for a meeting or a clinic? I'd like the Midwest to try to remember the last time someone from the International office dropped in for one of our monthly meetings . . . to say hello, to have a beer with us, to meet our chapter directors—and to find out what the little guy, the guy who is supporting the International, is doing and thinking. Why the detachment? Believe me, no matter what else, the International organization must never be above that.

In a way I hope I am proved wrong about the way things are now going. I may be off base, but I have an uneasy feeling that things in our International organization are not quite up to par. Perhaps we need bigger thinkers and a change in tradition and in our election set-up. We need better candidates on the slate to run for our board of directors. But how are we going to get them? Believe me, no one aspires to run for office anymore because they are fearful of getting involved in an operation that will take them away from their bread-and-butter job for so long a time. The three or more meetings a year take four or five days each. What outstanding or topnotch superintendent can be away for so long? No matter how good is his crew and how understanding is his club and how well he delegates at home, he just can't be away that long. The solution lies in the fact that the executive committee should set only policy—instead of directing every two-bit decision and getting involved in all minor details and discussions. That's what takes the time. And that's what is scaring off the younger

and more knowledgeable young men. The executive director and his office staff are hired for that. Why not delegate to them the authority to properly and professionally carry out their duties?

However, I want to say that I am in no way criticizing a few of the excellent directors we have now or those we have had in the past. My only concern is for the future, a future golden with promise—but only if we have the best possible men to lead our International Association of Superintendents. Let us reach for the stars and do what we can as individual members to make a better GCSAA.

For me the 1972 curtain is descending and it's time to step down. The picture show that has been mine to direct is over. Thanks for being a wonderful part of it. I'll never forget your support. May I say in this my final message to you that I am overwhelmed with the knowledge that nowhere in America exists a better, more dedicated, more fiercely loyal and gentlemanly organization than our Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents. Let's always keep it that way. Shalom.

Paul N. Voykin, President.



President, Paul Voykin attends Educational Conference? At Annual Meeting this man has to go. OUT.

ANNUAL MEETING

Flying Carpet Motel
Mannheim Road and Higgins Road

Cocktails — 12 noon to 1 P.M.

Lunch — 1 P.M. Butt Steak

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